

# **Collection Development Policy for Easton Library**

## **Mission**

The Easton Library strives to secure the informational, educational, cultural and recreational materials to meet the needs of the residents of the area served. The Easton Library is an active, friendly, welcoming community hub where the residents are enriched with new experiences and interact with their neighbors.

## **Objective**

The goal of Easton Library is to provide an impartial environment in which individuals and their interests are brought together with the universe of ideas and information spanning the spectrum of knowledge and opinions. The library board affirms the American Library Association's Bill of Rights, the Freedom to View and Freedom to Read, and the American Library Association's (ALA) guidelines on intellectual freedom policy statements in support of acquiring and managing collections.

## **Responsibility for Selection**

The Easton Library's materials collection is developed and managed to meet the majority of the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the library's service area. The library director builds and maintains a patron-oriented collection by anticipating and responding to needs and expectations. Ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the director who works within the framework of policies as established by the Board of Trustees. The selection of materials is the responsibility of the director or library staff under the supervision of the library director.

Collection decisions are made in conjunction with the strategic initiatives, especially the following:

- Positioning the library as the preferred partner for lifelong learning
- Embracing diversity
- Developing library services that incorporate both physical and virtual collections
- Committing to excellence in service to improve effectiveness and remove barriers
- Embracing Radical Empathy

## Criteria for Selection

Easton Library provides collections containing a wide variety of material formats, including print, audio-visual, and electronic. In selecting materials and developing collections for adults, as well as for children and teens, library staff includes materials that represent the broad range of human experience, reflecting the ethnic, religious, racial, and socio-economic diversity not only of the region it serves but also the larger global perspective. Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children. Library collections will provide a broad range of opinion on current issues.

Collections contain popular works, classic works that have withstood the test of time, and other materials of general interest. Works are not excluded or included in the collection based solely on subject matter or on political, religious, or ideological grounds. In building collections, library staff is guided by the principle of selection, rather than censorship. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis on the principals stated in this policy. Furthermore, the selection of a given item for a library's collections should not be interpreted as an endorsement of a particular viewpoint.

To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following standards. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable. Professional reviews of current literature relating, to various age groups, are sought to purchase new titles for the collection.

### General Criteria:

- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Cost
- Importance as a document of the times
- Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Attention by critics and reviewers
- Potential user appeal
- Requests by library patrons

### Content Criteria:

- Authority
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Skill, competence, and purpose of the author
- Reputation and significance of the author
- Objectivity

- Consideration of the work as a whole
- Clarity
- Currency
- Technical quality
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Vitality and originality
- Artistic presentation and/or experimentation
- Sustained interest
- Relevance and use of the information
- Effective characterization
- Authenticity of history or social setting
- Special Considerations for Electronic Information Sources:
  - Ease of use of the product
  - Availability of the information to multiple simultaneous users
  - Equipment needed to provide access to the information
  - Technical support and training
  - Availability of the physical space needed to house and store the information or equipment
  - Available in full text

Director and staff contribute to the development of patron-oriented collections by:

- Engaging in open, continuous two-way communication with library patrons and recognizing that individuals have different ways of expressing their needs based on age, language, economic status, culture, or other characteristics
- Interacting with patrons with understanding, respect, and responsiveness
- Handling all requests equitably
- Working in partnership with one another to understand and respond to community needs
- Understanding and responding to rapidly changing demographics, as well as societal and technological changes
- Recognizing that materials of varying complexities and formats are necessary to satisfy diverse needs of library users
- Balancing individual needs and broader community needs in determining the best allocation of collection budget for acquiring or providing access to materials and information
- Seeking continuous improvement through ongoing measurement
- Reviewing the collection on a regular basis to identify areas of community interest that may need to be strengthened

A balanced collection attempts to represent all sides of controversial issues as far as availability of materials, space, and budget allow. Selection is based upon criteria stated in this policy. The race, religion, nationality, or political views of an author or creator; offensive language; depictions or descriptions of violence or sexually explicit activity; controversial content of an item; or endorsement or disapproval by an individual or group in the community does not cause an item automatically to be included or excluded from the library's collection. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft.

## **Special Collections**

The use of rare and scarce items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm, but no further.

## **Gifts and Donations**

Gifts and donations of materials are reviewed using the same criteria as purchases. The library reserves the right to dispose of any gifts that are given to the library. The library will determine how to best incorporate such materials into the existing collections. Materials not added to library collections may be used for programs, given to other local organizations such as schools, senior centers, Friends of the Library groups, or included in the book sale or recycled.

The proceeds from this sale shall accrue directly to the benefit of the library, in a fashion consistent with accepted library policies and services as determined by the Board of Trustees. Any items unsold may be donated to another organization or discarded.

Funds may be given for the purpose of acquiring materials recommended by library staff as prescribed in this policy, or for purchase of specific items suggested by the donor. When the library receives a cash gift for the purchase of materials, the library staff must make the selection with the general selection principles set forth in this policy.

## **Weeding**

The library continually withdraws items from the collection, basing its decisions on a number of factors, including publishing date, frequency of circulation, community interest, and availability of newer or more valid materials. Items dealing with local history are an

exception, as are certain classics and award-winning children's books. Fiction that was once popular but no longer in demand and non-fiction books that are no longer useful are withdrawn from the collection. Withdrawn books will be sold in the book sale or recycled. The proceeds from such sales are used for the benefit of the library. Books that are not sold will be disposed of at the discretion the Library.

## **Potential Problems or Challenges**

The Easton Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of principles stated in this policy.

Community members will voice concerns or submit formal complaints to library materials. This policy establishes the framework for registering a complaint that provides for a review process with appropriate actions while defending the principles of freedom of information, the right of patrons to access materials, and the professional responsibility and integrity of the librarians involved in the selection process. The principles of intellectual freedom are inherent in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and are expressed in the Library Bill of Rights, adopted by the Council of the American Library Association. If materials are questioned, the principles of intellectual freedom should be defended rather than the materials.

## **Challenged Material**

Although materials are carefully selected, there can arise differences of opinion regarding suitable materials. Patrons requesting that material be withdrawn from or restricted within the collection may complete a "Reconsideration of Library Resources" form available at the circulation desk (see attachment).

## **Reconsideration of Library Materials**

*Easton* Library materials are selected through the process described in the Library's "Collection Development Policy." This policy states that since the collection reflects contemporary society, it may include material which is controversial or offensive to some. The Library acknowledges that occasionally patrons may have complaints or concerns about individual materials or categories of materials in the Library's collection.

The Library will handle complaints, ensuring that the complainant is respectfully heard and that the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom, as expressed in the Library Bill of Rights and ALA Freedom to Read Statement, are upheld. Complaints shall be handled in the following manner:

1. Informal Complaints:

a. Individuals or groups may initiate complaints about specific titles or types of material in the collection by talking to or writing to a member of the Library staff or the Director.

b. Staff or the Director should then offer a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form (appended to this policy), and explain the formal complaint procedure.

c. No further action is taken by the Library at this point.

2. Acknowledgement of Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form:

a. Once a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials is received by the Director, it shall be acknowledged by letter. This letter will contain copies of this policy and the Collection Development Policy.

b. If the complainant has checked out the item, no further action will be taken until said item is returned to the Library.

3. Evaluation of Library Materials:

a. The Director and/or a designated board member will read, listen to, or view the material in its entirety.

b. The Director and/or designated board member review the material in relationship to the Library's Collection Development Policy and determine one of several actions:

i. Retain the challenged material in the collection

ii. Retain the challenged material, but move it to another location

iii. Withdraw the challenged material.

4. Notification of Complainant:

a. The Director shall write a letter to the complainant stating the decision of the Library, as well as the reasoning behind the decision.

b. The letter will include the steps complainant may take if unsatisfied with the decision.

5. Notification of the Board of Trustees:

a. The Library Board shall be notified by the Director of any formal complaints, usually through the Director's Monthly Report.

6. Reconsideration by the Library Board of Trustees:

a. If the complainant is not satisfied with the written decision of the Director, he or she may bring the matter to the Board of Trustees.

b. To initiate consideration by the Board of Trustees, the complainant must write to the Library Director or President of the Board of Trustees and request that the matter be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting. The letter must be received at least ten (10) days prior to the next regular meeting of the Board. If received after that time, the matter may be deferred until the succeeding regular meeting.

c. The Director or Board President shall acknowledge receipt of the complainant's letter in writing, and shall include the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the matter will be considered.

d. Once the Request for Reconsideration is on the agenda, the Board shall decide by a majority vote of the members present whether it wishes to further consider the Request for Reconsideration.

e. If the Board votes to consider the matter further, an ad hoc review panel will be selected to evaluate the challenged material, a public hearing is set, and the matter is placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting.

f. If the Board does not vote to consider the request further, the matter is closed.

## 7. Ad Hoc Review Panel:

a. The ad hoc review panel is composed of at least two members of the Library's Board of Trustees and one staff member. (The ad hoc review panel shall not include the designated board member from step 3b.) Members of the review panel:

i. Read, listen to, or view the material in its entirety.

ii. Review the material in relationship to the Library's Collection Development Policy and the rest of the collection; and

iii. Consider what literary critics and reviewers think of the material.

b. After coming to individual conclusions, the committee meets to discuss the material and recommend one of several actions to the Board of Trustees, with reference to the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom:

i. Retain the challenged material in the collection

ii. Retain the challenged material, but move it to another location

iii. Withdraw the challenged material.

c. At the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees at least ten (10) days after the Director's receipt of the decision of the ad hoc review panel, the Board shall consider the recommendation of the ad hoc review panel.

d. The Board of Trustees may schedule a public hearing as part of a regular Board meeting or at a special meeting called to address the Request for Reconsideration. Said meeting shall be properly noticed, and the director shall issue a news release to inform citizens of the date, time and nature of the public hearing.

e. The Board of Trustees shall vote on the disposition of the challenged material. A majority vote of the full Board is required to remove materials from the Library's collection, to move materials from one location to another, or to otherwise restrict access to materials.

f. The decision of the Board of Trustees is final. Whatever the decision, the principles of the Library Bill of Rights will be reiterated, as well as how the decision is in accordance with those principles.



- g. Reconsideration of the item for substantially similar concerns will not be entertained for a period of five years after a decision has been made.

## **Reference**

### **Library Bill of Rights**

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

### **American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement**

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and

publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves.

These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

## **American Library Association Freedom to View Statement**

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

## **American Library Association guidelines on intellectual freedom**

### **Intellectual Freedom vs. Censorship**

What Is Intellectual Freedom?

Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of

ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored.

### Why Is Intellectual Freedom Important?

Intellectual freedom is the basis for our democratic system. We expect our people to be self-governors. But to do so responsibly, our citizenry must be well-informed. Libraries provide the ideas and information, in a variety of formats, to allow people to inform themselves.

Intellectual freedom encompasses the freedom to hold, receive and disseminate ideas.

### What Is Censorship?

Censorship is the suppression of ideas and information that certain persons—individuals, groups or government officials—find objectionable or dangerous. It is no more complicated than someone saying, “Don’t let anyone read this book, or buy that magazine, or view that film, because I object to it!” Censors try to use the power of the state to impose their view of what is truthful and appropriate, or offensive and objectionable, on everyone else. Censors pressure public institutions, like libraries, to suppress and remove from public access information they judge inappropriate or dangerous, so that no one else has the chance to read or view the material and make up their own minds about it. The censor wants to prejudge materials for everyone.

### How Does Censorship Happen?

Censorship occurs when expressive materials, like books, magazines, films and videos, or works of art, are removed or kept from public access. Individuals and pressure groups identify materials to which they object. Sometimes they succeed in pressuring schools not to use them, libraries not to shelve them, book and video stores not to carry them, publishers not to publish them, or art galleries not to display them. Censorship also occurs when materials are restricted to particular audiences, based on their age or other characteristics.

### Who Attempts Censorship?

In most instances, a censor is a sincerely concerned individual who believes that censorship can improve society, protect children, and restore what the censor sees as lost moral values. But under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, each of us has the right to read, view, listen to, and disseminate constitutionally protected ideas, even if a censor finds those ideas offensive.

### What Is The Relationship Between Censorship And Intellectual Freedom?

In expressing their opinions and concerns, would-be censors are exercising the same rights librarians seek to protect when they confront censorship. In making their criticisms

known, people who object to certain ideas are exercising the same rights as those who created and disseminated the material to which they object. Their rights to voice opinions and try to persuade others to adopt those opinions is protected only if the rights of persons to express ideas they despise are also protected. The rights of both sides must be protected, or neither will survive.

### How Do Censors Justify Their Demands That Information Be Suppressed?

Censors might sincerely believe that certain materials are so offensive, or present ideas that are so hateful and destructive to society, that they simply must not see the light of day. Others are worried that younger or weaker people will be badly influenced by bad ideas, and will do bad things as a result. Still others believe that there is a very clear distinction between ideas that are right and morally uplifting, and ideas that are wrong and morally corrupting, and wish to ensure that society has the benefit of their perception. They believe that certain individuals, certain institutions, even society itself, will be endangered if particular ideas are disseminated without restriction. What censors often don't consider is that, if they succeed in suppressing the ideas they don't like today, others may use that precedent to suppress the ideas they do like tomorrow.

### What Are The Most Frequently Censored Materials?

Throughout history, books have been challenged for many reasons, including political content, sexual expression, or language offensive to some people's racial, cultural, or ethnic background, gender or sexuality, or political or religious beliefs. Materials considered heretical, blasphemous, seditious, obscene or inappropriate for children have often been censored.

Since the dawn of recorded human expression, people have been burned at the stake, forced to drink poison, crucified, ostracized and vilified for what they wrote and believed.

### Aren't There Some Kinds Of Expression That Really Should Be Censored?

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that there are certain narrow categories of speech that are not protected by the First Amendment: obscenity, child pornography, defamation, and "fighting words," or speech that incites immediate and imminent lawless action. The government is also allowed to enforce secrecy of some information when it is considered essential to national security, like troop movements in time of war, classified information about defense, etc.

### What Is Obscenity?

Sexual expression is a frequent target of censorship. But the Supreme Court has told us that material is not obscene unless a judge or jury finds that an average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the material appeals to the prurient (or morbid, shameful, and unhealthy) interest in sex (note that, by its definition, the Court implicitly recognized that there is such a thing as a healthy interest in sex!);

that it depicts or describes certain sexual acts defined in state law in a patently offensive way; and that a reasonable person (community standards do not control this last element) would find that the material lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value. All three elements must be present for material to be judged by a judge or jury as obscene and, therefore, illegal.

### What About Protecting Children From Pornography, Whether Or Not It Is Legally Obscene?

The primary responsibility for rearing children rests with parents. If parents want to keep certain ideas or forms of expression away from their children, they must assume the responsibility for shielding those children. Governmental institutions cannot be expected to usurp or interfere with parental obligations and responsibilities when it comes to deciding what a child may read or view.

### How Do You Guide Children When You Can't Be With Them 24 Hours A Day?

Parents who believe that the current state of society and communications make it difficult to shield their children must nevertheless find a way to cope with what they see as that reality within the context of their own family. Libraries can be extremely helpful, providing information about parenting, open communication between parents and children, how to communicate with caregivers and the parents of your children's friends about your rules, and the opinions of various organizations representing a wide spectrum of points of view about materials for children.

If a child borrows something from a library which that child's parent believes is inappropriate, the parents are encouraged to return the item and make use of the expertise of their librarian to locate materials they prefer, among the hundreds of thousands of choices most public libraries make available.

### Don't Librarians Censor Everything They Choose Not To Buy For The Library?

No library can make everything available, and selection decisions must be made. Selection is an inclusive process, where the library affirmatively seeks out materials which will serve its mission of providing a broad diversity of points of view and subject matter. By contrast, censorship is an exclusive process, by which individuals or institutions seek to deny access to or otherwise suppress ideas and information because they find those ideas offensive and do not want others to have access to them. There are many objective reasons unrelated to the ideas expressed in materials that a library might decide not to add those materials to its collection: redundancy, lack of community interest, expense, space, etc. Unless the decision is based on a disapproval of the ideas expressed and desire to keep those ideas away from public access, a decision not to select materials for a library collection is not censorship.



### What If I Can't Find Something In My Library That Represents My Point Of View?

Ask for the materials you want. Libraries strive to serve the interests of the entire community. If your library is unable to purchase the material you want, it may be able to obtain it for you on interlibrary loan. Your library is there to help you find the information you need or want.

### If Materials Are On A Library Shelf, Doesn't That Mean The Library Approves Of Those Materials?

The presence of any particular materials in a library collection does not imply endorsement of the ideas expressed in those materials. The library is simply doing its job as a neutral provider of information from all points of view—if the library “endorses” anything, it is your right to have access to a broad selection of materials. If you don't find materials to your liking, ask your librarian to help you!

### What Can I Do To Fight Censorship?

Stay informed. Know what is happening in your state legislature, local school and library boards, and city councils. Write letters expressing your view to your mayor, and your state and federal representatives and senators. Attend your local school and library board meetings.

Review and revise the policy every two to five years – not during a challenge

Policy Approved: 6/6/2022